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Approved For Release 2004/10/20 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000700010043-3

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Cease-Fire Developments

9 June 73

State Department review completed



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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAMFighting on Upowing

Military activity by both sides has again increased during the past twenty-four hours, with the heaviest fighting reported in the central and delta provinces. But according to the US Embassy, much of the current action remains the result of government initiatives. There is still no firm indication that the Communists have launched another general "land-grabbing" campaign as in late January.

North Vietnamese troops in Kontum Province have occupied a village about seven miles west of the provincial capital. Military Region 2 commander General Toan has sent a two-battalion relief force into the area and ordered air strikes against Communist artillery positions around the city. Along the coast, North Vietnamese gunners and troops have harassed or overrun outlying positions in Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai provinces, although most of these actions appear aimed at blocking further government access to Viet Cong territory.

North of Saigon, strong Communist resistance has caused the government to call off an attempt to reopen Route 13. The Communists have shelled Lai Khe and An Loc, and have blocked other government efforts to reopen a highway to Phuoc Long Province. In the delta, action centered in Chuong Thien and Dinh Tuong provinces as government troops continued their spoiling operations into long-held Communist base areas.

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PRG Airline?

A PRG spokesman in Saigon claimed on 9 June that the PRG "has the right" to establish its own

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civil airline to serve areas under its control. Responding to a question at a press briefing, he confirmed that the Viet Cong are indeed building roads and airstrips in areas they control. This is the first public acknowledgement by the Communists that they are building airfields in the south. Asked if military aircraft would use the airstrips, the spokesman replied, "We hope it doesn't come to that."

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CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

Government forces along the Mekong corridor in the vicinity of Banam are facing renewed enemy pressure. On 9 June, a government unit guarding a bridge to the east of Banam withdrew into the town; on the same day, the enemy temporarily cut Route 15 leading south from Banam to Neak Luong.

West of Phnom Penh, Route 4 between Thnal Totung and Ang Snoul remains in enemy hands. Three government companies isolated by the enemy north of this sector were forced to abandon their position on 9 June and are attempting to return to government positions to the east and west. Food and medical supplies have been successfully air-dropped to government troops pinned down in the sugar factory on Route 26 a few miles south of Route 4. A government relief battalion is stalled about 2.5 kilometers north of the factory. Failure of the government relief effort is partly due to FANK indecisiveness in naming the unit to undertake the operation, thus costing a 3-day delay.

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